

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

CAN THE WORLD STAND A NUCLEAR IRAN?

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ABSTRACT

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The United States and the world are standing on the brink of mass proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. While there are normally three weapons we think of (nuclear, chemical, and biological) as being in this category, nuclear weapons maintain a clear and present danger to the security of the United States of America. Further, the threat of these weapons getting into the hands of terrorists poses a serious challenge to being able to stop nuclear weapons from detonating on American soil. With the end of the cold war, strategic alliances, and the former Soviet Union's ability to manage and control stockpiles of nuclear weapons, the threat has gone from mutually assured destruction to use by terrorists. The world needs a new and improved nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) that is amended to reflect the realities of a globalized and non-cold war environment. Strategic partnerships with old foes (specifically Russia), and implementation of a NPT amendment with provisions not only to deal with the situation in Iran but also the entire world are needed now. This paper focuses upon Iran and its current drive to produce nuclear weapons, since what is done concerning Iran will set the standard from now on.

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CAN THE WORLD STAND A NUCLEAR IRAN?

America has the distinct opportunity in the next year to finally set the United States policy for nuclear non-proliferation with an immediate and pressing test for this policy in Iran, and North Korea later.¹ The direction we set now will surely define the conditions for Iran as well as for future tests of United States and international resolve to stop proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear substances. The United States' goal is to stop proliferation, but past attempts have fallen short in instances such as North Korea and Iraq (before Operation Iraqi Freedom). What can America do to stop this scourge short of invasion and putting more of our men and women into ground combat? There are treaties, agreements, sanctions, inspection agencies, frameworks, and military action in effect, but some countries just don't follow United Nations sponsored, international initiatives. This paper will discuss Iranian history, nuclear program status, ties to international terrorist groups, and potential outcomes of Iranian intentions should they become nuclear capable. Also, the American National Security Strategy (NSS), policy statements, treaties, and frameworks will be analyzed to determine what can be done to "fix" the problem. This is done with full realization that many have gone before, and many will continue to make their absolute best effort at an internationally agreed upon framework for stopping continued proliferation.

IRANIAN HISTORY

Iran has a long and proud history. The earliest Iranian history can be traced before Persia and Cyrus through many dynasties and invasions, to the Safavid dynasty, and the reign of Shah Ismail. Shah Ismail consolidated the empire after incursions of Turks and Mongols in 1502, and established the Shiite sect of Islam as the state religion, which has remained as such through today. The Afshar, Zand, and Qajar dynasties followed through the early 1920s, when Reza Shah Pahlevi (an army officer) came to power via a successful coup and was subsequently elected hereditary Shah. During this time, the Iranian people constructed a constitutional government (with the consent of the Shah) in 1910, which has remained the primary source for democratic thought and government today. Mostly due to oil, other natural resources, and strategic location, Iran had been heavily influenced by western powers and the USSR through 1979. However, the people tired of this influence and Pahlevi rule, and in 1979 overthrew the government in an Islamic revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Many events occurred that drew international attention to include the seizure of the United States embassy, and holding 52 Americans hostage for 444 days. It was not until 8 billion dollars in Iranian assets were

released, and all Iranian demands were met that the hostages were freed.² This example set the tone for Iranian interaction with the western world.

Iranian leadership has since imposed a strict interpretation of the tenets of Islam, has continued an already terrible human rights record, and financed or otherwise aided international terrorism and terrorist groups.³ Iran today is a theocracy dominated by an appointed clerical “supreme leader” and “council of guardians”. These appointees can constitutionally change the outcome of elections (which they have done), and override legislation put forth by an Iranian “congress” that has otherwise demonstrated a clear democratic ability.⁴ The basic tenets of Islam do not agree with a government ruled by clerics, but it is not apparent that this is going to change anytime soon.⁵ Iran is blessed with economic resources, its belief in the Islamic faith, a rich history, and a penchant for strong central rule. Barring some sort of international intervention, these facts and a strong hold on the military will keep the supreme leader and council of guardians in power for the foreseeable future.⁶

IRANIAN TERRORIST TIES

Iran has supported international terrorist groups such as Hamas, Hizbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Iraqi insurgents, and Al-Qaeda with the sale and delivery of weapons, funding, training, and safe haven.⁷ These groups are accused, suspected, or have been proven to be responsible for various acts of terror throughout the world. Some of their actions include the 1983 bombing of the US Marine barracks and US embassy in Lebanon, killing and hostage taking of Americans and others throughout the 1980s, the Khobar Towers bombing in 1996, Argentinean bombings in 1992 and 1994, and further acts of terror in Israel and Saudi Arabia.⁸ Suspected involvement in the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania also adds to this mixture of terror.⁹ Iran has continued to maneuver itself to influence events in the Arab world mainly through funding, the establishment of a hospital in Gaza, and other social-welfare organizations in the Palestinian territories. Iran plans to use these to build grassroots support, propagate its anti-Israeli message, collect intelligence on the activities of United States officials, and provide direct support to Hamas and PIJ.¹⁰ Due to the ties that are already in place, Iranian leadership could easily sell nuclear material to terrorists once it has indigenous means to process and enrich such material. Even with the best of intentions and the stated peaceful purpose of Iran’s nuclear program, there is great potential that terrorists associated with Iran would use it to get what they really want, a nuclear capability. Once Al Qaeda has a nuclear weapon, it will be used against the United States “as a first resort”, as President George Bush has already estimated.¹¹ To illustrate, Osama Bin Laden’s press spokesman, Sulaiman

Abu Ghaith announced that in response to casualties inflicted on Muslims by the United States and Israel, Al Qaeda wishes "to kill 4 million Americans, including 1 million children".¹²

It is important to note that nuclear materials do not have to be detonated (as we normally think) to be effectively used as a weapon of mass destruction and mass murder. "Dirty bombs", the introduction of nuclear material into mass ventilation and air conditioning systems, or even allowing such material to "air off" in semi-enclosed areas can have devastating effects. Further, these methods may not be detected until symptoms of sickness and disease have already gone too far.¹³ How can we control this? Even if we traced the roots of the nuclear material to Iran, who could say that Iran intentionally let terrorists do this? What would be the international response at that point? Do we retaliate in kind against a supplier of nuclear material used in a terrorist effort? The unknowing country could be any of the current nuclear suppliers, which includes many of our allies.¹⁴

IRANIAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Iran has stated that their nuclear program is purely for peaceful means.¹⁵ One might ask the obvious question -- Why does Iran need nuclear power when it has 9% of and is ranked #2 in the world in strategic oil reserves?¹⁶ Iran's answer is that the revenue from the sale of oil will be used to improve their infrastructure, economy, and their standard of living while nuclear energy will be used to power the nation.¹⁷ The next question is whether or not the Iranians need to have indigenous uranium mining, a heavy water reactor plant, laser separation capability, ability to reprocess used uranium and plutonium, uranium hexafluoride gas manufacture capability, up to 50,000 gas centrifuges, and the eventual capability to manufacture up to 15 to 20 nuclear weapons per year at three separate nuclear sites?¹⁸ With this infrastructure, Iran will have total indigenous capability, and there is nothing we can do short of military action to stop it. The international community must act now to take a much harder stance against Iranian intentions.

IRANIAN INTENTIONS

Every country has the right to self determination, and to decide how that country will best serve the people it represents. But, should a regime that apparently doesn't represent the good people of Iran decide what path the country should take?¹⁹ Based on the evidence, a rational person would conclude the Iranian regime could sponsor an attack either directly, indirectly, or unknowingly on people throughout the world. Due to its strategic location, Iran could also use a nuclear weapon threat to hold hostage countries, people, and interests throughout the Middle East.²⁰ The nuclear threat could also be used to hold American (European, Russian, et al) cities

hostage in demand for their desires just as Iran demonstrated during the 1979 US embassy hostage crisis.²¹ Iranian Revolutionary Guards political bureau head, General Yadolla Javani wrote in reference to United States influence in Iran, "Indeed, the White House's 80 years of exclusive rule are likely to become 80 seconds of Hell that will burn to ashes everything that has been built."²² One does not need an imagination to picture what he has in mind.

Once Iran has the ability to manage nuclear material processing, disposal, and mining within their country, the risks go up. No matter how hard even a very conscientious Iran tries, simply due to government ties to terrorists, the likelihood of nuclear material being spirited away increases exponentially. In fact, Iranian intelligence has already collaborated with terrorist groups in identifying and studying not less than 29 targets in the western hemisphere to strike in response to past western "offenses".²³ The question is -- Can we stand a nuclear weapon detonation in an American city?

UNITED STATES NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

Currently, the United States NSS outlines a series of objectives and strategy toward reducing and controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the world. Broadly, the United States espouses the goals of peaceful relations with other states, political and economic freedom, and respect for human dignity. We are also prepared to intervene with preemptive force if necessary to stop WMD proliferation.²⁴ The NSS states that the nature and motivation of our new adversaries, their determination to obtain WMD, and the likelihood that they will use them against us, makes today's security environment more complex and dangerous than ever before. We cannot let our adversaries strike first with weapons that can be concealed easily, delivered covertly, and used without warning against America and our allies.²⁵ Further, the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction states that, "Existing nonproliferation and arms control regimes play an important role in our overall strategy," and pledges to, "support those regimes that are currently in force, and work to improve the effectiveness of, and compliance with, those regimes." The strategy also commits to, "promote new agreements and arrangements that serve our nonproliferation goals."²⁶ Finally, the Bush Administration has publicly declared that we "cannot allow the Iranians to develop a nuclear weapon".²⁷

Putting these objectives into the reality of today does not require much imagination, but we need to get the final policy straight. To deal with Iran, the United States must work through an international coalition with United Nations sanctions while reserving the right to act unilaterally to ensure our security. The nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968 serves as

the basic instrument for international requirements in the use of nuclear materials. This should continue to be the basic outline for agreement with UN / coalition enforcement to ensure nuclear weapon proliferation remains in check. In the 1960 presidential campaign, then candidate John F. Kennedy predicted that the world would see 10, 15, or 20 nuclear powers by 1964. As president, he predicted 20 nuclear powers by 1975.²⁸ However, due to the NPT, cold war alliances, and stringent enforcement of the NPT, there are only eight countries with nuclear weapons today: United States, China, Russia, France, Britain, India, Pakistan, and Israel. Nine, if North Korea is counted.²⁹ The international community must continue to recognize that stringent control is critical if the world is to remain free of rogue nations and terrorists that can and will use WMD to obtain their objectives.

NUCLEAR NPT AMENDMENT

Amending the nuclear NPT to make it more restrictive at this time is appropriate, as we have transitioned from the cold war into an era without the overlapping alliances and superpower enforcement that helped control proliferation in the past.³⁰ An amendment is allowed in Article 8 of the NPT, and needs to focus on a plan that has definite measures of success.³¹ This can be done with a policy of “three no’s” espoused by Graham Allison (former Ass’t Secretary of Defense for Policy and Plans): “no loose nukes, no nascent nukes, and no new nuclear weapons states”. The bottom line of this policy is no nuclear weapons or materials, means no nuclear terrorism.³² Measures should include: world-wide control of all fissionable material; international agreement on proliferation security; means to control, accounting for and destruction of current nuclear weapons; and an improved IAEA watchdog ability. It is important to note that initiatives in support of proliferation security, weapons accounting and destruction, and improved watchdog ability already have significant international support. These individual initiatives should not be stopped, but they should be formally introduced in an overall framework and ratified to amend the NPT. There is a unique opportunity to make this happen, as the 130 countries that have signed the NPT meet in May 2005 to review its effectiveness.³³

NO NEW NASCENT NUKES

Control of all fissionable material will allow achievement of the “no new nascent nukes” objective. A global cleaning out of the nuclear supplier group (NSG) should occur.³⁴ Nations that voluntarily offer their materials should be reimbursed completely and will not have to pay for transportation or storage. Internationally, NPT approved nuclear weapon countries (United States, Russia, China, France, and Britain) with secure, viable facilities in which to store the increased amounts of nuclear materials, and the IAEA (in an administrative role) should control

the process. Control should take the form of storage at agreed upon locations, open to inspection, with distribution and retrieval controls. Management of this type will have the added advantage of preventing a prestige race between countries desiring nuclear capability (whether for energy, or a non-disclosed weapons program), and should seal shut in law that non-weapon states cannot control or manufacture fissile material. Countries desiring to mine materials for nuclear production will have that ability, but should not be allowed to refine said materials in their own country.³⁵ After a thorough scrubbing of these procedures, efforts should address the three remaining areas covered by the NPT amendment. The three additional efforts include the Bush administration's Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), the Nunn-Lugar Act, and NPT additional protocol 93+2. Brief explanations of each follow.

NO NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES

The Bush administration's 19 month-old Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) should be included in the NPT in order to support a "no loose nukes" and "no new nuclear weapons states" objective. While PSI also includes chemical and biological weapons control, formally amending the NPT with provisions in PSI dealing with nuclear weapons would continue to maintain the NPT as an overarching agreement for control. Currently, core participants of PSI number 19 (including Russia, France, Germany and Britain) with 40 other states signing on to its principles.³⁶ Through PSI, seizure of the German flagged ship BBC China that was on its way to Libya with equipment for Moammar Ghadafi's covert nuclear weapons program was accomplished. This led Libya to formally renounce its nuclear weapons program and open up to inspections. While there have been a small number of other boarding operations and seizures of illicit cargo, this is the one that has caught the most public attention.³⁷ A key measure of PSI is that Liberia and Panama (under whose flag approximately 50% of the world's shipping occurs) agreed to allow boarding and seizure operations under the provisions of the agreement. The UN Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change has endorsed PSI and encourages all nations to join the initiative. The one state that is holding out and has been identified by the US Central Intelligence Agency as a major supplier of equipment and material related to illicit arms is China.³⁸ The following synopsis covers the major tenets of the agreement.

States will undertake either alone or in concert with other states, interdiction of the transfer or transport of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. Further, states will aid in the rapid exchange of information, provide resources for interdiction and coordinate procedures, strengthen national

and international laws to support this initiative, not transport or assist transport, and take action to board and search suspected sea and air vessels.³⁹

NO LOOSE NUKES

The Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991, better known as the Nunn-Lugar Act, can be used as a construct for cooperative threat reduction (CTR). The focus of this agreement is the following: “destruction of nuclear, chemical, and other weapons; transporting, storing, disabling, and safeguarding weapons to be destroyed; and establishing verifiable proliferation safeguards.”⁴⁰ Under the Clinton administration, Ashton Carter became Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Security and Counter Proliferation. Carter laid out a five stage plan in support of Nunn-Lugar. This plan was to assist in moving, storing, and destroying nuclear weapons in the four former Soviet republics of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The five steps are: “inventorying, tagging, and securing weapons; relocating weapons to 25 storage sites; dismantling the weapons; placing materials in long-term storage; and cleaning up nuclear facilities”. While Nunn-Lugar has had issues due to Russian unwillingness to cede control of the last vestiges of its great power status, the program has succeeded in highlighting the proliferation threat to the international community.⁴¹ Using Nunn-Lugar, the international community (with United States leadership) has helped deactivate a total of 6,564 warheads, plus multiple delivery systems. The tally for 2004 alone includes the following: removal of 312 nuclear warheads from missile systems; destruction of 41 SS-18 Satan missiles (each capable of delivering 10 independently targeted warheads); destruction of 21 missile silos housing SS-18 missiles; destruction of 18 Backfire bombers in Ukraine (each capable of carrying 3 air launched nuclear cruise missiles); destruction of 93 As-4/Kh-22 long range air launched nuclear cruise missiles carried by Bear and Blackjack bombers); destruction of 83 SS-N-23, SS-N-20, and SS-N-18 submarine launched ballistic missiles that were carried aboard Typhoon, Delta 3, and Delta 4 submarines; and destruction of 9 SS-24 mobile intercontinental ballistic missile launchers (each capable of delivering 10 independently targeted warheads).⁴² This ongoing CTR program already has international momentum and is gaining more and more with each action. The tenets of Nunn-Lugar could be updated and used as a starting point for NPT weapon destruction and security.

ADDITIONAL SECURITY PROCEDURES

The essence of the NPT Additional Protocol 93+2 is to reshape the IAEA's safeguard regime from a quantitative system that is focused on accounting for known quantities of materials to a qualitative system aimed at gathering a comprehensive picture of a state's

nuclear and nuclear-related activities, including all nuclear-related imports and exports. The Additional Protocol also substantially expands the IAEA's watchdog capability to check for clandestine nuclear facilities by providing the agency with authority to visit any facility (declared or not) to investigate questions about or inconsistencies in a state's nuclear declarations. The protocol outlined four key changes that must be incorporated into each NPT state-party's Additional Protocol.⁴³

First, the amount and type of information that states will have to provide to the IAEA is greatly expanded. In addition to the current requirement for data about nuclear fuel and fuel-cycle activities, states will now have to provide an "expanded declaration" on a broad array of nuclear-related activities, such as "nuclear fuel cycle-related research and development activities-not involving nuclear materials". States will also have to declare "the location, operational status and the estimated annual production" of uranium mines and thorium concentration plants. In addition, trade in items on the NSGs', trigger list will have to be reported to the IAEA. Second, the number and type of facilities that the IAEA will be able to inspect and monitor is substantially increased above previous levels. The new inspection regime provides the IAEA with "complementary," or pre-approved, access to "any location specified by the Agency," as well as all of the facilities specified in the "expanded declaration." By signing up to the Additional Protocol, states will in effect, guarantee the IAEA access on short notice to all of their declared and, if necessary undeclared facilities in order "to assure the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities." Third, the IAEA's ability to conduct short notice inspections is augmented by streamlining the visa process for inspectors, who are guaranteed to receive within one month's notice "appropriate multiple entry / exit" visas that are valid for at least a year. Fourth, the Protocol provides for the IAEA's right to use environmental sampling during inspections at both declared and undeclared sites. It further permits the use of environmental sampling over a wide area rather than being confined to specific facilities.⁴⁴

Currently, the United States and Iran have both signed this additional protocol but their respective legislative bodies have not ratified it.⁴⁵ This could be a first step by Iran to display intentions, and a good step for the United States in continuing to exercise our leadership in this regard.

DIPLOMATIC ACTIONS

The Department of State has already engaged the international community on these matters, but we must continue. One country, Russia, appears to have already proceeded with a framework similar to the NPT amendment discussed above (although not as comprehensive) to

put limitations upon Iranian use of fissile material. As part of the 800 million dollar Bushehr light-water nuclear reactor project, Russia has stipulated control of all fissionable material. Once the nuclear material has been spent, it will be shipped back to Russia for inventory and processing. While the two countries have not come to final agreement on the terms, it appears Russia is already in line with at least a portion of a proposed NPT amendment.⁴⁶ The United States should back Russia's play in this deal after strict scrutiny of the agreement, and formally approve of this approach.⁴⁷ Further diplomatic effort to get Russia formally "on our side" can and will pay huge dividends for the United States. The close personal relationship between Presidents Bush and Putin will continue to be a major asset, and Russia would most likely be a willing participant with the United States in the one issue it can still claim to be a superpower. A united front between former world antagonists who created this problem and still control 95% of all nuclear weapons and materials will set the stage for the future of nuclear nonproliferation.⁴⁸

Even with an internationally united front, diplomatic effort takes time and may or may not achieve results soon enough to stop Iran from getting the bomb. The international community must act with UN sanction to ensure enforcement of the NPT (current or amended) in all regards and to stop Iranian production of fissionable materials. Barring UN sanction, the United States and a coalition of the willing must be ready to act to enforce the NPT or in possible self defense. Any contemplated action should include both economic and military means.

ECONOMIC MEASURES

Iran's economy has done fairly well recently (mainly due to oil sales) in spite of sanctions already imposed by the United States. An increase in United States and / or international sanctions will most likely only inflame anti-American sentiment and rhetoric, without accomplishing much in the mean-time.⁴⁹ Bottom line is that time is of the essence, we are quickly running out of options, and current measures do not appear to have had much impact on Iran's position.

MILITARY ACTION

Much consideration should be given to military action or inaction on the part of the international community. Under tenets of the NSS and "Bush Doctrine", United States unilateral action in the global war on terrorism is already warranted since Iran is harboring terrorists and sponsoring terrorism.⁵⁰ However, we should be careful to exhaust all avenues of approach through an international coalition via UN auspices. Information campaigns should be targeted directly at the world audience and the Iranian people to ensure that the people understand what is at stake not just for the United States, but also for the world and the Middle East region.

Since Russia appears to have the greatest stake in the Iranian nuclear program at present, the United States diplomatic mission should approach the Russians first in order to gain their support for any action involving the military. With Russia by our side, the United Nations (or a coalition of the willing) is much more likely to sponsor international action against Iran. In any case, the United States must be prepared to go it alone if necessary.⁵¹

Prior to any action; however, we must consider the implications should a strike fail. If we fail, the risk of the Iranians going further underground and pulling out of the NPT framework is very real. This is exactly what happened in Iraq following a successful Israeli air strike on the nuclear facility at Osirak.⁵² Once the decision is made, our first priority should be to knock out Iranian nuclear production facilities, weapons delivery methods, and any possible weapons programs as quickly as possible. This can be accomplished by various means, but does not need to include a massive, sustained commitment of ground forces as in Iraq. In the use of military force, a coalition should not try to decapitate the Iranian government, only target Iran's nuclear program.

Iran is in the midst of a very active military build-up. Among many other items, the Iranian inventory includes medium range ballistic missiles that are able to hit any target in the Middle East, and plans include the possible purchase of advanced surface to air missile systems.⁵³ Any coalition or force acting against a target in Iran should be prepared to act now, and to counter this real-time threat as well.

THE INFORMATION WAR

An information campaign aimed at Iran should be part of the overall global war on terror. Iranians see the United States as many different things depending on the individual. The most prominent term coined by the Ayatollah Khomeini after the Iranian revolution was that the United States is the "Great Satan".⁵⁴ Before America can fight an information war, we must understand why he gave our great nation this label. We must also understand that while all Iranians do not feel this way, the governing bodies of Iran do, and so do many more. An information campaign aimed at Iran needs to continue to nurture those that like America while targeting those who think like Khomeini. In any case, we need to ask ourselves why America is seen as the enemy not only after the Iranian revolution, but also so quickly after we defeated the Soviet Union in the cold war. A brief look at western history in the Middle East may shed some light.

The west has been a contemporary scourge on the Middle East region since Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798.⁵⁵ After World War 1, and the fall of the last Islamic Sultanate in Turkey, France and Britain took the spoils of victory, and control of the former Ottoman provinces in the

Fertile Crescent. These lands were divided into three new countries, Iraq, Palestine, and Syria. Syria was later divided into Syria and Lebanon. The Ottoman Sultan, widely recognized as the caliph and head of all Sunni Islam was deposed, and the sultanate abolished. The Sultan was last in the line of Islamic rulers dating back to the death of the Prophet Muhammad, and because of this the west was immediately seen as the enemy of true Islam.⁵⁶ During World War 2, the German (through Vichy French Syria) propaganda machine distributed such effective anti-western sentiment that its impact is still felt today. The Ba'ath party and its subsequent domination of Syria and Iraq throughout the 20th century was born during the time of German influence, and the conflict between Arab countries and Israel. After the collapse of the Third Reich, another anti-western influence took its place in the form of the Soviet Union. The Soviets continued their rhetoric and posed as the champions of anti-western ideology. They therefore became the de facto sponsor of anti-western movements that swept through the Middle East after World War 2.⁵⁷ As America became the leader of the cold war against the Soviets, the de facto supporter of Israel, and the new western power in the Middle East, most of the anti-western sentiment zeroed in on the United States. A sound understanding of the history of anti-US sentiment is key to making our case to the Iranian people and the Islamic world. To take this "fight" to the "enemy", we must take advantage of the rapid increase in the ability to spread information instead of being afraid of it. Erasing the "Great Satan" label may be impossible, but if we want to win, the info campaign needs to start at our own doorstep before it can go to other countries.

Starting the campaign at home must happen before we try to export to the world. Our media is delivered globally every day through newspapers, magazines, books, television, movies, et al. The words and pictures in that media help determine what people think of us, and we need to be careful that too much of one side of the story can give the wrong impression. If we are to win the information campaign in Iran, our own information at home, and the information that is delivered internationally should at least be fair and balanced. Currently, there is little voice to refute negative claims, and tell the complete story of American involvement. Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Nigeria and others have taken American lives and dollars in support of Islamic people, but our own airwaves are filled with negativity about our country's policies, planning, and our errant military moves. We are captivated by the latest media reports of death, beheadings, suffering, and destruction in Iraq. If people remember anything about Somalia, it is that we left early after a sickening scene in Mogadishu, and that the United States doesn't have the stomach to stay if the going gets tough. The historic election in Afghanistan (validated and run by the United Nations) was hardly even covered in the news.

Similarly, there has been very little about the stability, food, and the Islamic lives that were saved due to the actions of the United States in any of the operations. We rarely, if ever, see information concerning United States aid comparisons to the rest of the world. In fact, the United States is the world's largest contributor in international development dollars, giving 16.2 billion in 2003 alone. Private United States aid was 35-40 billion dollars in 2003 as well. The closest rival was Japan, whose government gave 8.9 billion and Germany and France who gave less than 8 billion. Private aid from Europe and Japan is pitiful when compared to what the United States people give directly to international foundations. Further, the United States numbers don't include the amount of dollars spent when we send troops, ships, and aircraft into disaster areas.⁵⁸ The United States and the "west" are not the only nations involved in conflict with Islamic people. There have been clashes of culture in China, Bosnia, Kosovo, Timor, Sudan, Nigeria, Macedonia, Kashmir, and Mindanao. When we obtain this information, we should make it known to the world instead of allowing those countries to suppress the news.⁵⁹

If we don't take a positive message to Iran and the Islamic world, those that hate us will only continue to preach their brand of holy war, and use the latest eye-catching story to prove why America is the "Great Satan". The "Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders" has already sworn that it is the holy duty of every able Islamic person "to kill Americans and their allies, both civil and military...until the Aqsa mosque and the Haram mosque are freed from their grip, and until their armies, shattered and broken winged, depart from all the lands of Islam, incapable of threatening any Muslim."⁶⁰ This very powerful message is backed up by Al Qaeda attacks against us and our interests, and is sure to continue as long as world opinion is against the United States.

Our media must understand that by encouraging and showing a slanted, one-sided view, they will eventually completely isolate the west from the Middle East. Obviously, this would be disastrous. Not only would it jeopardize western economies, but it could beget a nuclear warhead detonated on western soil. In the case of the world trade towers, instead of an instantaneous response, rapid clean-up, and almost immediate restoration of Wall Street, New York City would be off limits due to nuclear contamination. North America most likely would have suffered greatly from drifting fallout similar to what happened in Europe during the Chernobyl disaster (or worse). This may happen with or without a change in the media, but negative reporting only serves to increase the potential. Even though it may not initially receive the highest ratings in the United States, a fair and balanced message needs to be presented in order to build an international information coalition that looks favorable to the Iranian people. The bottom line is if positive change is going to happen in Iran, Iranians will make it happen.

They have already proven resilient enough to topple the Shah in 1979; perhaps a peaceful revolution to topple the current regime can happen too.⁶¹

CONCLUSION

Previously, two superior powers controlled the nuclear arms of the world and through them, their proxies. With the end of the cold war and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, we can no longer say this. There is now one rogue country that owns nuclear weapons (North Korea), and another that is quickly dancing its way to not only getting the bomb but also getting its own means of mass production of nuclear material. This country (Iran) is worrisome as it has open and avowed connections with Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations.

The NSS is well defined and incorporates in a broad sense the objectives the nation is driving toward. Policy statements are very direct and to the point as to whether or not Iran should have a nuclear weapon, or the capability to produce a nuclear weapon. The current United States strategy should be consolidated into a firm message not only to Iran but to the world as well. What we set as United States policy in Iran will set our policy for the future, and the world needs to see the United States leading in this regard. Continuing our tough stance and exhausting every way and means available is the only method to take care of the Iranian problem. We cannot and must not waiver in our efforts to take the real and potential WMD nuclear threat away from Iran.

WORD COUNT=5,780

ENDNOTES

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⁴ William (Bill) Samii, "Iran, 25 Years Later," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 8 (June 2004): 5.

⁵ David M. King, *What Should Be United States Policy For Iran ?*, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 19 March 2004), 8-12.

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⁹ Levitt.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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²⁷ Julie Kirtz, "U.S. Mulling Options to Deter Iran, N Korea," 9 August 2004; available from FOXNews.com; Internet; accessed 23 September 2004.

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